

# THE LEISURE HOUR

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## HOW I ASCENDED THE RIGHI.

I AM led to say a few words on this subject, from the fact that, whatever the merits of guide-books may be (and they are great), they are still not precise enough in their directions to settle the

mind of a hesitating and ignorant traveller. Nothing is more common than to hear, among the hordes of English who frequent the hotels at Lucerne, such questions as these:—"How had we best go up? Murray mentions three ascents.

No. 188, 1855.

Which is the shortest? which the prettiest? will it do for A.? will not B. be fatigued?" etc. Having myself and party passed through all these doubts and difficulties with success, I will here narrate exactly what I did in 1852, in company with two other ladies, one of whom might be considered as wholly inefficient for mountain walking.

The best way from Lucerne is to go direct to Arth; the drive is a very beautiful one, by no means fatiguing, and may be accomplished in about two hours. It is indispensable to send the day before to the landlord of the hotel at Arth, to order horses for the ascent, also *chaises à porteur* if required; and at the same time a boy should be sent up to the Righi Culm to order beds for the party, which otherwise, in fine weather, there is but a very small chance of procuring. Another hotel, called the Staffelhaus, is situated about half an hour short of the culm; but, in our opinion, it is much less convenient for seeing the sun rise, as it entails on the already unwilling sleeper the necessity of half an hour's earlier rising and a walk for that purpose.

If there is any objection to driving from Lucerne all the way to Arth, it is easy to go to Küssnacht by the steamer, and then across in a small carriage to Arth; this is cheaper than hiring a carriage all the way from Lucerne, but more fatiguing, and, I think, less agreeable.

On arriving at Arth we dined at the inn there. The *Hôtel des Alpes* is perhaps the best; but all are, in my opinion, indifferent and high in price, unless you are wary enough to make an agreement beforehand. This observation, indeed, applies to all Swiss inns without exception. After making as tolerable a meal as circumstances permitted, we proceeded to mount our horses—very good animals for the purpose, so strong and sure-footed that we willingly forgave all defects in their personal appearance. For those who are unable to make any great and active exertion, I should recommend a *chaise à porteur* being engaged, both for the ascent and descent. This may be done at a cost of from eighteen to twenty francs. The ride from Arth is quite free from difficulty, and presents to the view much that is both interesting and beautiful. On leaving Arth, itself occupying a lovely position on the lake of Zug, between the bases of the Righi and the Rossberg, the road winds along for a time without ascent, as far as Goldau, about two miles further on the way. Here, for the first time, we perceived the remains and traces of that direful calamity, the fall of the Rossberg, which in 1806 overwhelmed the original village of Goldau, and carried away in the vortex of its mighty desolation, property to the amount of 150,000*l*. Many interesting stories are told of this sad event; some of them I cannot resist repeating, though probably they may not, on perusal, produce the same effect as on those who heard them when in actual contemplation of the ruin which has been produced; for the mountain, which is nearly 5000 feet high, remains scarred and torn by the convulsion; long seams descend its sides towards Goldau, and the vacant space along its top, left by the descent of a portion calculated to have been a league long, 1000 feet broad, and 100 feet thick, tells but too truly the sad story of devastation.

The whole side of the mountain which now presents this wretched appearance, was formerly covered with fields, woods, and houses. It seems, as is usual in such cases, that the inhabitants were not left without warnings of the coming catastrophe. The summer had been very rainy, and on the two first days of September also, rain fell incessantly; crevices were observed in the mountain; cracking noises were heard internally; and on the 2nd of September, in the afternoon, a large rock was seen to fall, raising a cloud of black dust. Towards the lower part of the mountain, the ground seemed forced down from above, and when a spade was driven in, it moved of itself. A man who was digging at the time, ran away frightened at these portentous signs. Soon a fissure longer than all others was observed: it increased visibly; springs of water ceased to flow, the trees of the forest reeled, and birds flew away screaming. Before five o'clock the symptoms became even more alarming; the whole side of the mountain seemed to be gliding down, but slowly, so as to afford time for flight. This being the case, one hardly comprehends why the loss of life should have been so great. But, as in all like histories, from the destruction of Pompeii downwards, some extraordinary infatuation seems to have held the victims on the spot, to meet their doom. This was the case with an old man, who, having often predicted some such disaster, was quietly smoking his pipe, and when told by a young man who was running past, that the mountain was falling, returned into the house, saying that he had still time to fill another pipe. The young man, continuing his way, escaped with difficulty, but, looking back, saw the finger's dwelling carried off all at once. A lesson it was, and a suggestive one, to those who are delaying their flight from a lost and doomed world.

Another man succeeded in saving his own life and the lives of two of his children; but his wife, with a child in her arms, was buried in the ruins. Their fourth child, Marianne, aged five, whom the poor mother had remained behind to seek, was found in the house with the servant-maid Francesca, who afterwards gave the following account. "The house, which was of wood, seemed to be torn from its foundation, and spun round and round like a teetotum. I was sometimes on my head, and sometimes on my feet, in total darkness, and violently separated from the child." When the motion subsided, Francesca was wedged fast in the ruins, with her head downwards. She soon heard faint moans from the poor child, who was also stuck fast among stones and banches, but with her hands free. They prayed together, expecting death every moment, but were slightly cheered towards evening by hearing the bells of a neighbouring village. Poor Marianne cried for her supper, but at last fell asleep. Thus they passed the night. As soon as daylight came, the unhappy father, who had wandered about in all the agonies of suspense, came to search in the ruins for the rest of his family. His cries, and the noise he made in digging, were heard by Marianne, who called out. She was released at last with a broken thigh, and so also was Francesca, but in such a state that her life was for some time despaired of. She was blind for some days, and

subject to fits of convulsions. It appeared that they must have been carried with the ruins at least 1500 feet.

I must conclude this digression, however, merely adding that the danger of further calamity from this terrible mountain is by no means at an end. Even now repeated cracks and fissures are observed, which gradually widen, and fragments are detached which may be but the forerunners of larger masses, dooming to destruction the poor inhabitants of this dangerous vicinity.

The best time for ascending the Righi is late in the afternoon—as late as possible—so as to catch the sunset on arriving at the Culm. If the weather is very hot, this will be found more agreeable than being exposed to the glare of the midday sun; but a good part of the path lies through shady woods, and about half-way up a tidy little inn, called Unter Dächli, offers repose to man and beast. Here good milk and bread can be had. The scenery, as we advanced towards the Staffelhau, was very lovely, for though no distant views are here obtained, the path running along a deep gully in the interior of the mountain, we were enchanted with the soft lawn-like pasture, the beautiful wild flowers (especially some exquisite varieties of the gentian), the clear dancing streams tumbling in every direction down the rocks, and the herds of tiny cream-coloured cows with their musical bells, leaving the shade of the ample woods to enjoy in the cool decline of day the fresh green grass which here abounds.

On arriving at the Staffelhau, part of the grand view bursts on the sight, but not complete in all its beauty, until, half an hour later, the summit or Culm is reached. I preferred to walk this part of the road, as the path is rugged and bad, and I thought the view more enjoyable, when relieved from the presence of my tired horse and chattering guide, and left to my own devices. I would advise every one here to dismiss their horses. The guides try hard to persuade or bully people into keeping them for the descent. Against this I warn the unwary. Those who can, should walk the descent to Weggis, which can be accomplished on foot in three hours, and is by no means particularly fatiguing; but for those not able to do this, the only way of descending in comfort is in a *chaise à porteur*.

I doubt if any one who has never passed a night in the hotel of the Righi Culm can imagine the scene it presents. When I was there it accommodated (how, I never could understand) one hundred and sixty persons, of all descriptions and of various nations. The chattering, scrambling, quarrelling, and confusion, beggar all description. Here an Englishman, with a limited knowledge of any foreign tongue, is in hot dispute with the guide, whose horses have conveyed his wife and daughters up the mountain; there a foreign courier is storming at the landlord, because his master, a Russian prince, has not the accommodation monseigneur requires; and everywhere Americans smoke, and swagger, and depreciate the merits of all they see. The Germans quarrel the least, partly because they are least cheated, and partly because they expect nothing beyond the pipe and beer, of which they are tolerably sure.

Owing to our precautions of sending forward a

messenger, we, with some wrangling, obtained the keys and numbers of our rooms. In the two were four beds; and though they removed the superfluous fourth, in spite of all protestations we were compelled the next morning to pay for the whole. The supper proved, as might be expected, quite a seramble, and no efforts could turn it into a decent meal. To snatch a few morsels, devour them like a dog in a corner, and escape as soon as possible from the fearful heat of the room, was all that I individually accomplished; and I doubt if my companions, who staid somewhat longer, fared any better. Had I been aware of the state of things in that department, I should certainly have taken some provisions with me.

The night, though in August, was very cold; and it is a remarkable fact that, at that height, there is some peculiarity in the atmosphere which prevents the beds from ever feeling really dry. I was so struck with this, that when I first got into bed I jumped out again, and endeavoured to protest against their condition. Of course all my efforts were vain; I might as well have talked to a tribe of wild Indians, as to any of the poor hard-worked slaves of the inn; and so I turned in again, covering myself with all the clothes I could lay hands on. It is very disagreeable, but I believe not dangerous, as no one seems to suffer from it. I believe the safest plan would be to take off nothing but one's outer garment, which also would facilitate the arrangements in the morning.

At half-past three the inexorable horn is blown, to rouse the visitors from their slumbers, and a most unmistakeable sound it makes; for it is a ponderous instrument of wood, most perseveringly blown for several minutes. By four o'clock the Culm is covered with gazers, some sleepy, some wide awake and excited, and all in most wonderful costumes. The morning was very cold, and the whole grand panorama that lay stretched out before us on every side was enveloped in the stern grey of early dawn, awaiting the great orb of light to reanimate the scene; but grim and severe as the mountains looked on all sides, we were charmed to perceive that all were clear, and that a more favourable morning could not be wished for. The only parts of the scene bathed in mist were the low grounds or valleys, where lie the lakes of Lucerne, Zug, and others. It is said that eleven lakes are visible; but the most of these are so small as to appear only like pools.

Anxiously we kept our eyes fixed on the east, where the peaks of the Dödi, the Glärnisch, and the Sentis appear; also above the lake of Löwertz, and the town of Schwytz, the two sharp peaks called the Mitres. Occasionally we stole a look round to the south, to gaze on the unbroken range of the High Alps of Berne, Unterwalden, and Uri. That magnificent white chain—one long ridge of peaks and glaciers, including the Jungfrau, Eiger, Finster Aarhorn, Titlis, Bristenstock, and Seelisberg—lay displayed before us in all their grandeur. I was looking at these when the reflection of the coming sun shed over the whole, first a pale pink, but soon a vivid rose light, spreading along the whole line, and colouring every separate peak with beauty. I have never seen a more splendid effect than this, for the sun

rises so suddenly that the cold grey is chased away almost before one is aware of its absence.

This was followed by a general cry of "He's coming!" "He's coming!" in all languages; and, turning again to the east, I saw the glorious sun rush up (for no other term can express the rapidity of his appearance), and gild all nature with his golden magnificence. I do not pause to describe the emotions that filled the soul at such a spectacle. Many writers have done so, and in a way that leaves nothing to be added. Suffice it to say, the spectacle was singularly fitted to enlarge our conception of the great Creator's grandeur, power, and glory. For nearly an hour we remained gazing at every point and every side of the gorgeous scene, which far surpassed all expectations, and can, I am sure, be imagined by none who have not seen it. Such a sight repays one a hundred-fold for all the inconveniences and hardships of the undertaking; and as I have told them all faithfully, my readers must judge how far to them the pleasure will outweigh the pain.

After a hasty and scrambling breakfast, though somewhat more satisfactory than the last night's supper, and a prolonged contest respecting the extortions of our bill, we at last got our party in order, and proceeded to descend the mountain by the road to Weggis, which winds along the outside of the mountain, in constant sight of the lake. Some of these views are most beautiful, and give one a better idea of the varied beauty of the lake of Lucerne than many an hour's tedious rowing on the same; all the villages and churches on its banks look so bright and pretty, and the forms of the mountains which surround it are seen to great advantage.

The two great objects in the descent are, first, the Cold Bath, where a new and clean inn, containing twenty-six bed-rooms, has been built. The very cold water issuing out of the rock is supposed to be highly efficacious in some cases. About half an hour's walk below this is the singular natural arch called "the Felsenthor," formed of two vast detached blocks of pudding stone, which hold a third suspended between them, and beneath this the path is carried. But time pressed, and we could not linger as long as we should have wished, to enjoy the varied beauties of the scene. How delightful was that early summer morning! The steamer was awaiting us, and there was no time to be lost if we would catch the early one (which we succeeded in doing), and so returned to our old quarters at Lucerne, rejoicing, as we heard some English tourists express it, in having "*done the Right*."

#### PARIS.—THE CRECHE.

PREVIOUS to visiting Paris this summer, we had heard a good deal of the philanthropic institutions, which, under the designation of crèches, a society of benevolent individuals had established, chiefly upon a charitable basis. The numbers of women of the lower orders, mostly in the bloom of life, or prematurely ageing through incessant toil and exposure to all weathers, whom one meets in the streets and public places of the city and in all the

favourite resorts in the outskirts, brought these institutions to our recollection. The wife of a Parisian labourer, far more than wives of the same class in London, pulls in the same boat with her husband; it is well indeed if, from want of employment on his part, she does not pull alone. The French workman, unless he be a skilled artisan obtaining high wages, has no notion of maintaining his wife in a state of idleness; nor does he think the care of the family, if he have any, a sufficient claim to her exclusive attention. The necessity of the case, moreover, demands her co-operation, to supplement as far as she may the small gains upon which they have to subsist; and, therefore, work she must. But the trade and commerce of Paris, where there are no staple manufactures of any importance, offer her no regular market for her industry; and in the majority of instances she has to seek or to create a vocation for herself, which she pursues as best she may in the streets and highways or in the crowded gardens of the suburbs. This is a sad necessity to contemplate, but its fruits are sadder still. It led, in fact, to the desertion by parents of their hapless offspring, whom they found at once a burden and a hindrance. In the conflict between the claims of hunger and maternal affection, the latter frequently succumbed, and the hapless infants, consigned in the obscurity of night to the revolving box of the foundling hospital, were abandoned for ever by those who had brought them into the world. It was the melancholy discovery and appreciation of this dismal fact that led to the establishment of the crèches, which are institutions supported partly by voluntary contributions, and partly by small payments from those who profit by them, for the reception of infants of tender age requiring the care of a mother or a nurse during the working hours of the day. They are open from eight in the morning to the same hour at night, and the charge to the parent for the care of each infant during the twelve hours is twopence. If the child is not weaned, the mother comes at proper intervals to suckle it, and in all cases both brings it in the morning to the crèche and fetches it away in the evening.

There are in Paris, at the present moment, about twenty of these establishments scattered in various parts of the city, and all under the control of a society which holds periodical sittings for the regulation and management of its affairs. That the crèches are thoroughly appreciated by the hark-working mothers is evidenced by the fact that, since their establishment, in 1852, nearly fifteen thousand infants have been consigned to their tender care. More than this—it has been proved beyond a doubt that contemporaneously with, and we may reasonably assume in consequence of, their use, the number of infants abandoned to the public care has very considerably diminished. Looking to the natural anguish which a wretched mother must undergo before she would consent to resign her child for ever to the care of strangers, we may conceive how eagerly she would grasp at any means of escape from such an alternative. The crèches are not self-supporting, and it is not easy to conceive how they could be made so; the government, however, pays 7000



frances yearly towards their support—a sum which it probably saves by diminished expenses in the care of the foundlings.

Resolving to pay a visit to one of these crèches, and judge for ourselves, we commenced inquiries, the other day, on leaving the Exhibition of the Fine Arts, as to the locality of one or other of them. To our surprise, not a single person out of twenty at least whom we addressed, knew anything about them. An elderly gentleman, who was particularly courteous, went so far as to assure us that we were mistaken—that there really was nothing of the kind in Paris, or he should have known of it, having resided in the capital for the last sixty years.

"If you doubt my word," he said, "you can inquire at the police office yonder, close to the Exposition; the police know everything, and they will tell you."

To the police office we went. The chief officer, who was writing at a table, politely pointed to a seat, and, having finished his note, inquired our commands.

"La crèche! la crèche!" said he; "I know nothing of it—I never heard of such a thing. Are you sure that is the name?"

"Quite sure."

"What is a crèche, then?" said he.

"A place where infants are taken care of."

"Oh, you mean the Foundling Hospital."

"No, I don't—quite another thing—not an hospital at all"—and we began to question whether the police really do know everything.

"Tenez, Monsieur—sit down—I will make inquiries"—and he rung a bell.

A tall swordsman entered, bowing low.

"This gentleman wants to visit la crèche—do you know what that is, and where it is to be found?"

"That is a question for my comrade, sir. He will answer it satisfactorily."

"Send him here."

The comrade bounced in a moment.

"La crèche," said he, "is a house for the reception of poor people's infants while their mothers are at work."

"Just so," said we.

"Rue de Chaillot, No. 40, Monsieur—you can walk it in half an hour or less."

In a minute we were on the route to the Rue de Chaillot, and after some further inquiries found the crèche, though not at No. 40, but in the rear of a bathing establishment a few doors off.

The house was situated at the end of an airy, open court, and on approaching the door we could look down into a garden below, where a good part of the spectacle we had come to see was open to the general view. Under the shadow of a mulberry tree, and further on under that of a wide awning spread on poles to intercept the broiling rays of the sun, lay sprawling, laughing, kicking and crowing together, two or three groups of infants and young children from six months to four years of age. A merry-faced middle-aged woman came to the door at the summons of the knocker, and in answer to our inquiry whether we could inspect the crèche, invited us in. That part of the house appropriated to the purposes of the institution consisted only of two chambers, about twenty-feet

square each, and fitted up for the accommodation of the little creatures who there passed their days. In the lower room, which appeared to be designed for the elder children, were a series of miniature berths placed round the walls within a few inches of the floor, so that no damage could ensue, in case the tenants of the beds should roll out upon the ground. Several children, between the ages of two and four, were fast asleep in these little cribs—the window curtains being drawn, and only a dim light pervading the apartment. When the matron drew aside the curtain, and let in the sunshine, a little urchin, beautiful as a cherub, roused up, and, staring at us with a pair of large blue eyes, seemed puzzled at our unwonted apparition; but, not being able to make anything of it, thrust his thumb deep into his mouth, and lay down again to sleep. The most scrupulous cleanliness prevailed throughout the house; the linen was white and spotless as the snow-wreath, and the floors were clean as a trencher; and a current of fresh pure air swept through the rooms. Ascending to the upper floor, we found upon the landing a basket containing a few vegetables, radishes, onions, and a bunch or two of cherries tied in pennyworths; these were the property of a young mother, at that moment suckling her three months' babe within. On entering, we found her sitting at the window, the child at her breast. Around her were some twenty or two dozen light couches or cradles of metal, of the neatest design imaginable—something after the fashion of a seashell—either one of which would be an ornament to a drawing-room, though they probably cost but a trifle in making. The same exquisite cleanliness prevailed here also, and the same abundance of fresh air and light. To-day, there were but five of the unweaned infants in the crèche, but the matron informed us that there were frequently as many as from twenty to five-and-twenty at a time. Leaving the young mother to her cares, we now descended to the garden, where all those children who were not sleepy were amusing themselves by rolling on the grass, or the soft matting spread under the tent and the mulberry tree. Here a young girl of sixteen shared the duty of the matron in amusing the children—a task in which she had no trouble, and seemed perfectly successful, judging from the fun and infantine frolic that prevailed. We had no difficulty in getting up a romp, which the little roysterers would have prolonged to an indefinite extent had our leisure served.

"When they tire themselves out," said the matron, "they drop off to sleep, and we carry them in to bed; that little rogue with the brown face is a deceiver; he pretends to be asleep, and when I have put him to bed, will jump out and be down here again before I can catch him. Ha! you rogue, you know it's true!"

The infants all look well and healthy, and in reply to questions on this point, we learn that many who are puny and pale when they first come, recover health and strength by a month or two's course of the crèche. We do not wonder at such a result. The life that infants here lead appears to us the very life that unconscious infancy should lead. They have no pampering—no silly indulgences; but they have air and exercise, and kind

tendance and heedful care. We left the crèche with the conviction that whatever there may be to deprecate in the social aspect of Paris, here at least is one good work—one instance in which christian charity stretches forth a helping hand to suffering humanity.

### THE SERPENT HOUSE IN THE ZOO-LOGICAL GARDENS.

As we enter within the doors of the great room appropriated to the reptile tribes in the gardens of the Zoological Society, and throw a momentary glance around us, a strange spectacle opens to our sight. We are surrounded by a series of glass-fronted cases, or dens, of different dimensions, in which are displayed an assemblage of tortuous, coiled, and creeping things, suggesting to our mind the "monsters, hydras, and chimeras dire," which some demon enchantress might collect around her—fit guardians of her hateful abode and of her hoarded treasures.

As we look from side to side, there they are palpably displayed, in attitudes as varied as imagination can conceive—wild, grotesque, and startling; some, like the long pendent shoots of the banyan tree, hang downwards from a branch, with a writhing motion, as if swayed by the breeze; others, like giant creepers, are wound around the boles of trees, or intertwined amongst the forks, in a trailing tortuous maze, resembling erratic branches interlocked together. Some, rolled up into a compact form, are perched on the angle of a fork, and might be taken for birds' nests, were it not that from the centre, a head, known to be such by two bright glancing eyes, is slightly raised. Some resting on moss, or sand, have their neck elevated with swan-like tournure, while their long body forms a circularly-folded base; others are restlessly creeping about, twisting and turning in every possible degree of flexure; and others again are so covered by the sand and pebbles, to which they assimilate in colour, that their eyes alone betray them. A few lie coiled in groups together, or are twisted with others of their kind into apparently inextricable knots; while others glide along the ground, then up the trees, and amidst the branches, displaying the most easy and graceful evolutions. Such are the serpents; in contrast with which are lizards of all kinds and sizes, from the alligator to the little gecko; huge toads, and beautiful little tree frogs, green as the greenest leaf on which they perch; sluggish tortoises and turtles, that seem indifferent to everything around them, and almost unconscious of their own existence.

Such is the scene which presents itself. All is silence, save that now and then it is broken by a deep croak or a clear whispered rattle, difficult to describe, but if once heard never to be forgotten; or by a shrill prolonged hiss—the tokens of momentary disturbance. Such is the scene by day; but as the shades of evening come on, and the room is deserted, save by a keeper and a solitary visitant, animation pervades the whole assemblage; a confused rustling is heard, more frequent become the hiss, and the rattle, and the croak, and the tenants of every den are in motion, waving, and gliding, and swinging, darting with energy, or insidiously

creeping about, as if impatient of confinement or eager for their prey. Who can describe the thousand contortions into which the serpents now throw themselves, changing at every instant! Long could we gaze, as if fascinated by the spectacle, but we cannot intrude longer. Such is a *coup d'œil* of the serpent room; such is one of the most extraordinary spectacles which it has been our lot to contemplate.

Few persons enter the serpent room without experiencing the mingled emotions of curiosity, repulsion, and attraction. We regard these reptiles with very different feelings from those with which we contemplate the imprisoned lion, majestic even in captivity; or the tiger, whose fierce spirit is unsubdued by bondage. Though assured of safety in both cases, yet we receive impressions from the serpent race which we can scarcely analyse. There is something in the fixed glassy eye, in the form of the head, and the characters of the mouth, which renders the physiognomy uninviting. Their elongated, scale-covered body, destitute of limbs, seems to be acted upon by some unknown agency. All their movements are tortuous and creeping; they wind along, silently and insidiously, and an air of subtlety pervades every action. Nor are these impressions effaced by a more intimate acquaintance with the tribe, the stealthy advance of which towards their prey is closed by an assault, sudden and rapid as the flight of an arrow from the bowstring.

At the same time it must be observed that these reptiles are interesting objects of study. Almost infinitely various are their peculiarities and modes of life. Some are terrestrial, some arboreal, some aquatic; others are to be dreaded from their strength and ferocity; others from their venomous fangs: but many are harmless. Numbers of them are richly coloured; some displaying rainbow hues of exquisite purity, or the bright contrast of mingled tints; while others gleam like burnished bronze and gold, with effulgent radiance. None utter the voice of melody; their tones are restricted to simple sounds, expressive either of anger or of fear, or else intended as call-notes; but how unlike the love-strain of the nightingale!

As we gaze around we are suddenly aroused by a piercing hiss, and on turning we find that we have unwittingly irritated a cobra, or hooded snake, whose vindictive eyes glitter upon us from beneath a tent-like canopy, into which the back of the head and sides of the neck expand themselves. Graceful is the curve of elevation from the coiled-up body to the towering head. We cannot move but the head as suddenly turns; the eyes bespeak intense watchfulness and ferocity; they are untwinkling stars that seem to shed a baleful influence around. Defiant is the reptile's port, threatening is its attitude, and often from between its half-unfolded lips quivers its black forked tongue. It is the basilisk of the ancients, bearing a regal crown, blighting the herbage with its breath, and striking dead with the gleam of its eyes. Deadly is the weapon-fang of the cobra; and it is from this circumstance, combined with its ferocity, its upraised head, its expanded hood, and the fixed glare of its eye, that ancient superstition attributed to it even supernatural powers.

It was deemed a thing of mysterious birth; all creatures quailed before it, save the few that bore a charmed life; and so diffusive was its poison, that should the reptile be transfixed by the spear of a mounted horseman, its virulence, conducted through the weapon, was destructive alike to the rider and his steed. Yet had this animal at least one mortal foe (so truth blends with fable), namely, a kind of weasel, or ichneumon, which not only dared but invited the combat, and ever came off the victor. If bitten during the conflict, it retired for a short time—so it was said—to eat some rue, the only herb which the monster's breath could not parch up, and then returned animated with fresh vigour to the charge.

In all climates and in all ages snakes have been regarded as mysterious creatures, as living things endowed with strange properties, curative or noxious; as foretellers of good or evil; as gifted alike with the power of renewing their youth, and of fascinating the destined victim by their glance. They have been regarded as kind or malevolent demons, as messengers of the gods, as guardian genii, and as destroyers; as objects of terror, and equally so as objects of adoration. The locks of the petrified Gorgon's head were writhing snakes, and snakes entwined the caduceus of Mercury and the healing staff of Esculapius.

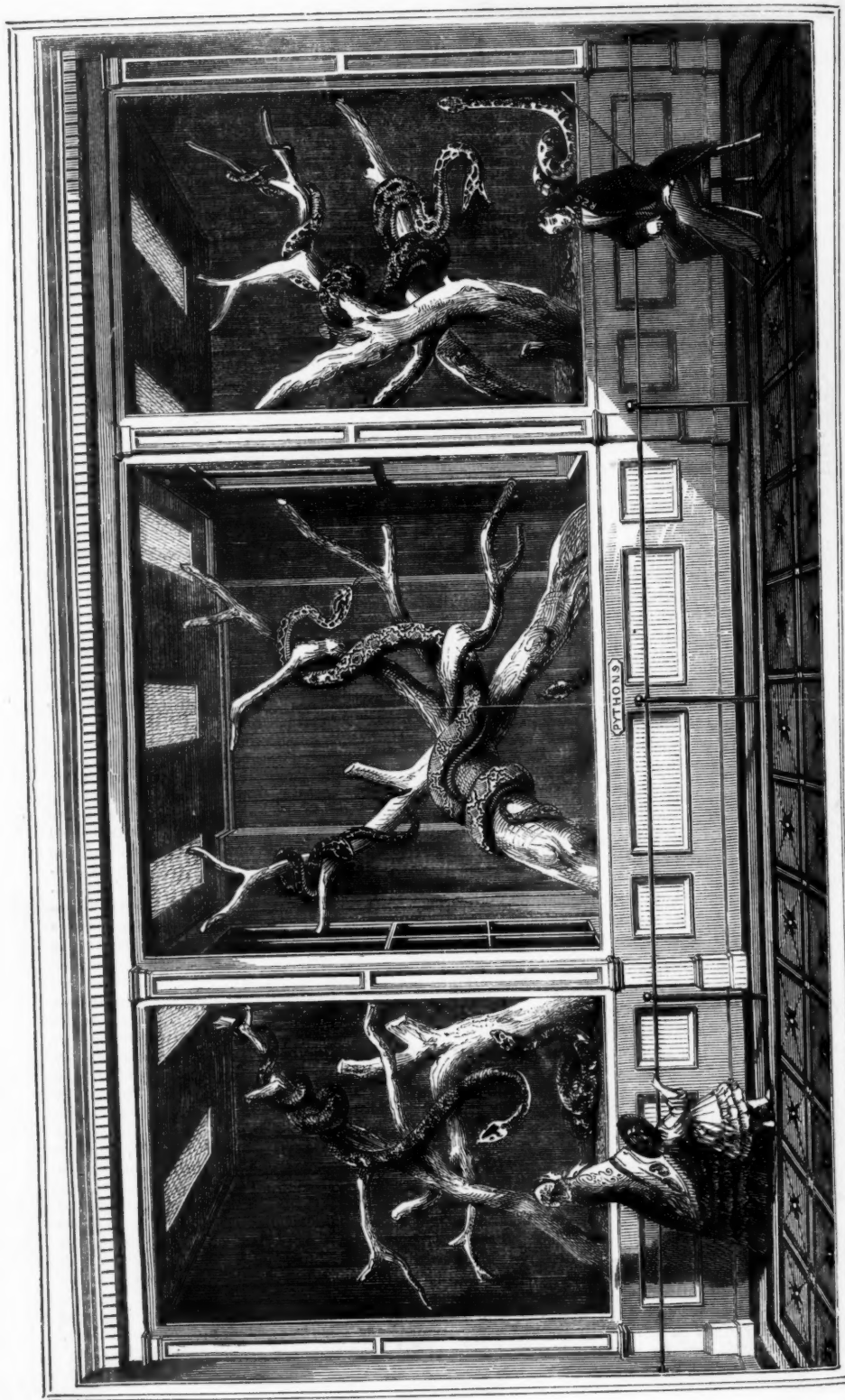
Among the serpents which in Egypt and India have been treated with especial veneration is the cobra, or hooded snake, of which there are several species, both Indian and African. Nor is this veneration yet extinct; for colonel Briggs assures us that "this active and deadly serpent is sometimes worshipped in temples, where it is pampered with milk and sugar by the priests; and a surprising instance of the effect of kind treatment in subduing the most irritable spirits is exemplified in these creatures. The Hindoos have a notion that the sagacity and long-cherished malice of this snake are equal to those of man. I have seen them come out from their holes in the temples when a pipe has been played to them, and feed out of the hand as tamely as any domestic animal; and it is when in this state of docility, so opposite to their shy but impetuous nature, that the common people believe that the Deity has condescended to assume their form."

Dr. Davey observes, that in Ceylon "the natives in general rather venerate the cobra de capello than dread it. They conceive that it belongs to another world, and that when it appears in this it is merely as a visitor. They imagine that it possesses great power; that it is somewhat akin to the gods, and greatly superior to man. In consequence, they superstitiously refrain from killing it, and always avoid it if possible. Even when they find one in their house they will not kill it, but, putting it into a bag, will throw it into water. They believe that this snake has a good and generous disposition, and will do no harm to man, unless provoked."

No doubt the cobra will not attack a man, unless provoked; but then, no snake is more easily provoked, or more pertinacious in following up its attack. An encounter with an enraged cobra (or *naja* and *nais*) is no trifling affair; for though seldom more than five or six feet long, the reptile is active and springs on its foe with great velocity; its sight is quick, and its actions are prompt and

rapid. In fact, the cobras are always ready to fight when their haunts are rudely invaded; they advance upon the intruder with the head elevated, the skin of the neck expanded, and with a loud clear hiss, sufficiently indicative of their intention. "To witness such a proceeding," says Dr. A. Smith, "once fell to my own lot. Walking in the vicinity of Graham's Town (South Africa) I happened to excite the attention of a *naja*, which immediately raised its head, and warned me of my danger by the strength of its expiration; it then commenced to advance; and, had I not retired, I should in all probability have suffered, had I not been fortunate enough to disable it. Even though I retired I was not satisfied that the danger was past, as the flight of this snake's enemy does not always put a stop to its advance when once commenced. An officer of the Cape corps, upon whose word the most implicit reliance was to be placed, informed me that he was once chased twice round his wagon by an individual of the same species, and the pursuit might have been prolonged had not a Hottentot disabled the enraged reptile by a blow from a long stick." We have heard of similar occurrences, both in India and Africa, when, after the destruction of its mate, the surviving snake has pursued its enemy with the utmost perseverance. Pliny, in his account of the Egyptian asp, or cobra, after observing that it usually lives in pairs, adds:—"If one happen to be killed, the other seeks with the utmost fury to avenge its death; it knows and selects the destroyer from among crowds, and can only be deprived of its revenge by the most speedy flight, or the intervention of some rapid river."

This is also the character of the *hamadryas*, a gigantic species of hooded serpent found in Java, Sumatra, Bengal, &c., and which is not only ready to attack, but, as Dr. Cantor assures us, to pursue its retreating foe. The *hamadryas*, of which fine specimens exist in the collection of the Zoological Society, is arboreal in its habits, tenanted the trees along the banks of rivers, and feeds on lizards and snakes. "Two specimens of the *hamadryas* in my possession," says Dr. Cantor, "were regularly fed by giving them a serpent, no matter whether venomous or not, every fortnight. As soon as this food is brought near, the serpent begins to hiss loudly, and, expanding the hood, rises two or three feet, and, retaining this attitude as if to take sure aim, watching the movements of the prey, darts upon it in the same way as does the *naja*. When the victim is killed by poison, and by degrees swallowed, the act is followed by a lethargic state, lasting for about twelve hours. Such of the other Indian serpents, the habits of which I have had opportunity to study from life, show themselves much inclined to avoid other serpents, however ready they are to attack men and animals when provoked or driven by hunger; and I am not aware of any other of these serpents being recorded as preying upon its own kind (that is, upon other serpents). A short time ago, however, during my sojourn at the Cape of Good Hope, I received from high authority the following fact, which throws a light upon the habits of the *naja* of Southern Africa. One of these, being captured, disgorged the body of a puff-adder, which bore the marks of having been submitted to the process of digestion."



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That serpents more frequently feed on other serpents than was formerly supposed, is now abundantly proved. The poisonous snakes in India of the genus *Bungarus* feed not only upon rats and mice and other small quadrupeds, but also upon serpents; and in the island of St. Lucia, the clibro, a non-venomous snake, feeds principally upon other serpents, and among them upon the rat-tail, a venomous species, whose bite, fatal to man and other animals, has no effect upon this scaled foe. Lieut. Taylor (in *Proceeds. Zool. Soc.*) says: "I myself have seen on more than one occasion, in their combats, the fangs of the rat-tail enter into the body or head of the clibro, and bring blood from the spot, while the clibro has taken no more notice of it than to get the head of the rat-tail into his mouth as speedily as possible, and begin to swallow him alive. I have satisfactorily proved that the clibro does not kill his prey before he has swallowed it, by allowing a clibro to swallow a courresse (a small harmless snake), all excepting the very point of his tail, then pulling him out and giving the courresse again to the clibro, keeping it alive for months afterwards.

"It may not be uninteresting to describe here a fight between a large clibro and a rat-tail, the latter being nearly half as thick again as the former, but not so long: they were each, however, upwards of four feet in length. Upon being placed together in a barrel, the clibro immediately seized the rat-tail by the middle, and twisted three times round him; while doing this, the rat-tail bit him in the back and drew blood. They both then remained quiet for several seconds, when the clibro slowly moved his head up behind his own body, and looked over it under its cover to the point which lay nearest to the head of the rat-tail which was four or five inches distant. Waiting for about a couple of seconds in this position (the rat-tail having never moved during this interval), the clibro made a dart, and with almost incredible rapidity seized the head of the rat-tail in his mouth, and began to swallow him, which he accomplished in rather more than three hours."

But the clibro does not confine himself to snakes of other species; occasionally, at least, he devours the weaker of his own kind. Two clibros were kept together by Lieut. Taylor, in a drawer, where they lived in harmony for some weeks. There was no great difference between them in size. A day or two after, having refused food which Mr. Taylor offered them, he again visited the drawer, when to his surprise only one snake presented itself. This snake, however, was much thicker than usual, and semi-torpid; but on being rudely disturbed, he revived, and disgorged the remains of his late companion in a half-digested state, the scales still remaining perfect.

This circumstance reminds us of an occurrence which took place a few years ago in the Zoological Gardens, and which we have elsewhere narrated. Two boas were kept together in a large box, and when visited by the keeper in the morning, it was found that one had swallowed the other during the night, and lay bloated and torpid. In a few days he disgorged the scales of his associate.

It is a very remarkable fact that the clibro should be unaffected by the poison of the rat-tail, for it is ascertained that venomous serpents kill other spe-

cies by their bite, but not individuals of their own species; and we have seen that the hooded hamadryas kills its victims by its poison fangs, whether those victims be themselves poisonous or not.

It would appear that all poisonous snakes either kill or wound, with their venom fangs, the prey they are about to swallow. Some of the non-venomous snakes, as the boas and pythons, first crush their victims to death by enfolding them in their strenuous coils; while others, as our common snake, merely seize their prey and swallow it alive. The cry of a frog, after being engulfed, has been heard for several minutes.

We may here observe that in the hooded snakes, or najas, the pupils of the large glassy eyes are circular, and the powers of vision are diurnal. At the same time these snakes are active during the hours of evening, and even during the night. The cobras prey habitually upon rats, small birds, lizards, and, one species at least, upon fishes. Dr. Cantor assures us that the Indian cobra (*Naja lutescens*) not only ascends trees, but frequently takes to the water, and even to the sea along the coasts, in pursuit of fishes.

Deadly is the poison of the cobra: it is found to be of an acid quality, but what the nature of this acid may be has not been determined. Dr. Cantor, who tested the fresh poison, states that he is not prepared to say that the *essential poison itself* is acid, though it is certainly associated with an acid; and he adds that, most probably, from the rapid and spontaneous disappearance of its properties by keeping, the *poison itself* consists of some exceedingly unstable compound, which would be wholly disorganised under any attempt at isolation by chemical means.

The species and varieties of the cobra are very widely distributed. India, Assam, the Malayan peninsula, the Indian islands, Egypt, and the whole of Africa from North to South, possess these dangerous reptiles, which have been celebrated from the earliest antiquity, and on which the jugglers and snake-charmers of the East have ever practised their incantations, and with the feats and contortions of which, to the sound of the pipe, they have astonished and overawed spectators. On this subject we shall here say little, because we have treated upon it at considerable length in the *Popular History of Reptiles*, published by the Religious Tract Society, to which work we refer our readers.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

#### THE HON. HENRY CAVENDISH.

It is the biographer's privilege to be present at the hearth and home of the subject of his memoir, to see his every-day performances, to chronicle his acts, without explaining to the world how the home was invaded, how the observing eye found means to evade the barrier, or the recording pen to write. We ask our reader, then, by the force of will, to annihilate the last forty-five years, and to imagine himself the world's denizen in the year 1810, and follow us.

We go to witness a death-bed scene; Clapham is the locality; the house is, at the period of our narrative, known as Cavendish House. We enter: the domicile has all the aspect of a gentleman's

mansion; but its interior arrangement is so peculiar that one wonders what the owner's avocation can be. One chamber we see fitted up like a blacksmith's shop; here are anvils, forges, tempering troughs, files, hammers, and in short almost everything that a blacksmith could require; but there are other things too which a blacksmith would not have. Philosophical apparatus lie about in confusion: here an air-pump taken to pieces, there a transit instrument, yonder the compensation-pendulum of a clock. Vainly we look for the artificer—he is not there. Taking our way through a long corridor we open a door, and pass into a suite of noble apartments. Their aspect is equally strange with the last, but quite different. They are devoid of furniture, but filled with all sorts of chemical instruments. In one corner is a furnace, the embers of which are yet glowing, proving that the operator has recently been there. On a large table in the centre of the room is an electrical machine; by the side of it a Leyden battery, and a curious instrument of thick glass, known at this present time by the designation of Cavendish's endiometer; but the most striking feature in the apartments is the vast number of thermometers which hang from the walls. Examining the thermometers more narrowly, we discover in them a peculiarity of construction. Their frames bear traces of home manufacture; there are none of the neatly cut figures that we see on the thermometer scales of philosophical instrument makers, but their scales are roughly engraved; yet no mere amateur has evidently done this, but one who, desirous of having his instruments correct, has known how to make them for himself. *This* is evidently a chemist's domain; but we look in vain for the chemist. No one is there.

Wandering along in our visit of exploration, we ascend a flight of stairs, and at length witness some signs of human habitation; one sitting-room, meagrely furnished, and one bed-room—that is all. But perhaps the owner of the mansion, whoever he may be, prefers to live one flight higher. We ascend again to find it is not so. All this portion of the house has been converted into an astronomical observatory, two rooms only excepted, the furniture of which sufficiently indicates their use. They belong respectively to the family domestics, a female housekeeper and a footman. Softly! we hear a noise in the observatory, and return. In our hurry, we did not thoroughly explore it. Looking more attentively, we see, half hidden behind the stand of a large telescope, a pale infirm old man. He is intently gazing on the stars, for twilight has almost passed away. Let us not disturb him, but note his appearance and costume before the night sets in. In stature he is below the middle height; his countenance thin and very pale. His forehead is broad and intellectual, his eyes are bright and shining, but his features display no trace of sentiment or passion; he might be likened to a sculptured block of marble, were it not for the radiant intelligence of his eyes; but that radiance is peculiar: it has in it nothing of human sentiment; it is the light of the moonbeam, cold and cheerless. Our strange individual is evidently stricken in years, and his attire is that which was fashionable in his youth. Perukes, even in 1810, are not quite unknown, but the peruke of our strange philosopher

is of very antique shape: its curls are very tight, and the queue is of the obsolete form known as the *knocker pattern*. His wrists are enveloped in lace ruffles, and he has a frill of similar material. His coat is of velvet: its colour was originally violet, but time and use have faded it down into a sober neutral tint. Its cut is antique, but we are familiarised with it in the court dress of the present day.

Thus much for the appearance of our illustrious stranger, for he is indeed such—illustrious even in the sense of heraldry, for he comes of one of our most noble families; he is the grandson of a duke. But he is celebrated in another sense; the honourable Henry Cavendish is one of England's most renowned philosophers—great as a chemist, great as a mathematician, great as an astronomer. No science was too expansive for the grasp of that master-mind, none too minute for the limit of his scrutiny. To weigh the earth, to unveil the mysteries of the stars, to solve the most complex lunar problems—these were the occupations of his life. Henry Cavendish seems to have been born for the purpose of demonstrating the power of the human mind as a calculating machine, and of proving how little the possession of that power implies the co-existence of those sympathies which ennoble human life, rendering man, when he rightly directs them, that which poets have termed him, God's noblest work.

The old philosopher, whom we see gazing at the orbs of heaven, has numbered more than seventy-nine years. He who for so long a time has studied the decomposition of bodies, and predicted the advent of eclipses, and calculated the time when comets should reappear, feels that the hour of death is at hand. The mystery of death is only known to those on whom eternity has dawned, and who have stood face to face with the great Omnipotent. There is, besides, a cognate mystery, one little discussed, but the existence of which is real—the sentiment of death approaching. What that sentiment, that vague prescience may be, who knows save those who have experienced it? But who, at all conversant with death-bed scenes, especially those of aged people, can doubt that a vague sentiment of approaching dissolution is often a reality—a sentiment which, though vague and undefinable, is often justified by the result, which is speedily followed by death itself, so surely as thunder succeeds the lightning's flash. The old philosopher trembles, the telescope drops from his hand, he utters a faint scream. He feels he is about to die. His mental disturbance is but instantaneous; he gets up haggard and bleeding, for one of the telescope glasses has broken in falling, and has slightly cut him. He slowly descends from his observatory to the sitting-room, where, sinking into an arm-chair, he lays his hand upon a bell and rings it gently. A male domestic appears.

"Edgar," said Cavendish, addressing him by name, "listen! Have I ever commanded you to do an unreasonable thing?"

The man heard this question without much astonishment, for his master had the character (not without meriting it) of being an eccentric person. He replied in the negative.

"And that being the case," continued his master, "I believe I have a right," proceeded Cavendish, "to be obeyed."

The domestic bowed his assent.

"I shall now give you my last command," said Cavendish. "I am going to die. I shall now retire to my chamber; there let me be alone, for I have matters to arrange. Let me be alone for eight hours. Tell no one: let no one come near. When eight hours have passed, come and see if I am dead. If dead, let lord George Cavendish know. This is my last command. Now, go!"

The servant knew, from long experience, that to dispute his master's will would be useless. He bowed therefore, and turned to go away.

"Stay—one word," interrupted Cavendish; "stay—one word. Repeat your orders *exactly*." And thereupon he caused the servant to repeat the directions previously given. Obedience was promised once more.

But the directions, even though given by an eccentric man, were too mysterious to be implicitly followed. They seemed to point to suicide; for who, not intending this, could foretell so closely the period of the great event. One, two, three hours passed away. Cavendish had retired to his apartment, and all was still. Was he dead, or still living? Edgar durst not ascertain; but, feeling anxious, as well he might, hurried away to London, and made the particulars of his situation known to sir Everard Home, the celebrated medical practitioner. Cavendish was personally known to sir Everard—known as a mere acquaintance, however, for Cavendish had neither enemies nor friends. The intimation was so alarming that neither sir Everard nor the man could banish entirely the idea that the philosopher's brain had become turned; that a too arduous devotion to philosophical pursuits had begotten insanity. The will of Henry Cavendish, too, was noted for a certain inflexibility which nothing could swerve from a purpose resolved upon. If, therefore, he had set his mind on the commission of suicide at some premeditated hour, he would probably do so if not interrupted. Such were the reflections which occurred to both the servant and sir Everard as they hurried away to Clapham.

They arrived considerably before the expiration of the appointed eight hours, and, proceeding at once to the bed-room in which Cavendish lay, listened for an instant outside the door. Not the most acute hearing could discover the slightest sound: it was silent within. They entered, Edgar keeping well in the back-ground, not caring to encounter his master's gaze, after breaking the promise so solemnly given. Sir Everard approached the bed. The curtains were not drawn; Cavendish was not dead, nor was he asleep. His eyes were still open; but they appeared not like the eyes of a living man. They gazed abstractedly into space, as if the world had no longer any object upon which their glances might fall. His lips were quivering, but voiceless—seemingly in communion with some invisible being.

Sir Everard, approaching still nearer, gently removed the coverlet, and took Cavendish by the hand. The philosopher, thus disturbed in his last reveries, remembered that the sanctity of his retirement had been infringed. He started, but made no remark. Looking round the chamber, he presently recognised Edgar in the distance, and, frowning sternly, beckoned him away.

Sir Everard asked him if he felt ill.

"I am not ill," replied Cavendish, "but I am about to die. Don't you think a man of more than seventy-nine has lived long enough? Why am I disturbed? I had matters to arrange. Give me a glass of water."

The glass of water was handed to him; he drank it, turned on his back, closed his eyes, and died!

Such was the end of the honourable Henry Cavendish. We have not drawn upon our imagination to invent a death-bed scene: the most daring writer of fiction would scarcely have been guilty of such temerity; for the incidents are most improbable. But the mental constitution of this great philosopher was a puzzle to those who knew him best. It defied all their acumen to fathom it, and remove its shroud of mystery. Even had he not been one of England's greatest philosophers, his biography would have been interesting; but when his numerous discoveries in the walks of science are considered, a double interest is thrown around his career. A sketch of his biography we shall therefore proceed to give.

Henry Cavendish was elder son of lord Charles Cavendish, third son of the second duke; his mother was born lady Ann Grey, fourth daughter of Henry, duke of Kent. Nice was the place of his birth, in the year 1731, his mother having retired thither for the benefit of her health. Of his infancy and early childhood very little is known. We hear of him, almost for the first time after his birth, in the year 1742, when he was therefore eleven years old, at which period of his life he was sent to the school of the Rev. Dr. Newcome at Hackney—a seminary then celebrated for the education of aristocratic youths. He remained at this academy seven years, and made himself no way remarkable, so far as we can learn, either by his talents or peculiarities. One circumstance in relation to his scholastic career deserves comment, as proving that the extraordinary reserve which characterised him in after years, and made him shun the society of his fellows, was only an extreme development of a youthful feeling. The records of Dr. Newcome's school record that Henry Cavendish never took part in certain entertainments got up by the boys for their amusement. And here, before accompanying Cavendish in his university career, a circumstance should be mentioned, which is not, we are disposed to think, without significance as connected with the morbid peculiarities of the subject of our memoir. He lost his mother when only two years old. This, though a circumstance usual enough, and which has occurred frequently without generating misanthropic feelings in the child subjected to the privation, was not, we think, without an influence on the subsequent character of Henry Cavendish.

In 1749, he matriculated at St. Peter's College, Cambridge, where he remained until 1753, and then left without taking a degree. The latter remark also applies to his brother, who was studying at Cambridge at the same time. In explanation of his leaving without a degree, various conjectures have been made. The reason advanced by some, to the effect that he feared the test of examination, is scarcely consistent with the cir-



cumstance of his profound scientific acquirements, more especially in the mathematics, as evidenced in his future career. Perhaps the extreme dislike which he manifested throughout life at being the subject of public remark, even in the way of commendation, may have influenced him; or, still more likely, we are disposed to think, the existence of certain religious scruples which did not accord with the university tests, at that time very stringently observed. Even in his early youth he had been suspected of entertaining unitarian doctrines; and though his religious opinions were veiled throughout life in extreme mystery, there is reason to believe that the distinguished subject of our memoir died as he had lived, without realising to himself the Divine inspiration of Holy Writ. Those who have traced his career through life, with all the minuteness that his aversion to human society and his extreme habits of retirement permit, assure us that from the day of his baptism he never entered a place of worship of any kind, and that, when he felt the hour of death to be approaching, he retired to his chamber, as we have already described, commanding that no one might interrupt him. What the matters were that, to employ his own phrase, "*he wished to arrange*" in this solemn hour, of course we do not know; but the most probable supposition is, that he desired to pass these last moments of existence in silent contemplation. It is melancholy to have to record such facts. How different would have been his career had his love of knowledge been chastened and elevated by acquaintance with Him who of all others is the object most worthy of being known. Experience has shown, by many a bright example, that it is possible to be a man of profound science, and yet to sit with humility at the feet of the Saviour.

We do not purpose in this short memoir to enter upon the scientific discoveries of Cavendish; these would embrace too wide a field, and would involve points of discussion not suited to the apprehension of a general reader. Perhaps the most remarkable investigation associated with his name is that respecting the composition of water; which fluid, hitherto regarded as an element or simple body, was now proved to be the result of combination between oxygen and hydrogen. We are aware that the merit of Cavendish, as sole discoverer of this interesting fact, has been disputed. There is no space here to mention the reasons which could be adduced in favour of the scientific claims of the subject of our memoir. Let it suffice to say, that he is recognised to have been the sole discoverer of the composition of water by those who have gone into the question most deeply, and is acknowledged to have contributed the major points of the discovery by all.

It is not with the question of the scientific grade of recognition to which Cavendish is entitled, that we have to concern ourselves in the course of these remarks. That award has long since been made by impartial judges, and needs no amplification at our hands. It is with Cavendish regarded as a strange moral phenomenon that we have to deal; and we shall best acquit ourselves of that by relating a few well attested anecdotes. Up to the age of forty, the subject of our memoir was poor—his total annual income (being an allowance from

his father) not exceeding £200; indeed, according to some authorities, falling short of that sum. This was indeed a small stipend for the son of a noble family; and popular rumour was not slow to attribute the restricted amount to the displeasure of lord Charles Cavendish at the peculiarities and impracticable disposition of his son. The truth of this explanation, however, is by no means apparent. When about the age of forty, a very large fortune came into the possession of Henry Cavendish, left him, it is believed, by some distant relative; but concerning this there is again some doubt. Our philosopher had so long been obliged to cultivate habits of economy, that, without being parsimonious, these habits had become engrafted in his system; and after indulging in the purchase of books and instruments to the extent of his fullest wishes, he still found that the interest of money accumulated faster than he could spend it. He therefore presented an example of that very rare phenomenon—a man whose pecuniary means were so large as to be troublesome. A curious instance of one of these singular troubles is as follows.

On one occasion, his bankers in the city finding that a very large sum of money had accumulated in their tills to his account, and thinking that it had better not lie idly there, determined to wait on him and receive his instructions in the matter.

Accordingly, one of the principals hied away to Clapham with the intention of seeking our philosopher in his lair. *That* was no such easy matter, however; for, once committed to the recesses of his *den*, Henry Cavendish never liked to be disturbed.

The banker knocked; the subject of his visit was a delicate matter, and of course could only be communicated personally.

To the interrogatories of the footman as to who he was, and what his desires might be, of course the only answer was that he wished *personally* to communicate with Mr. Cavendish.

"At any rate, sir," replied the footman, "it would be as much as my place is worth to disturb him now. You must wait until he rings his bell."

The banker had waited for more than an hour when the long expected bell rang. The footman announced his name.

"What does he want with me?" Cavendish was heard to say.

The footman explained the banker's desire to have a personal interview.

"Tell him I cannot see him. I am very busy," was the reply.

The footman bowed and retired.

"Stay," interrupted his master; "how long has Mr. — been waiting?"

"For more than an hour, sir."

"Oh, very well, very well. Send him up."

"I am come, sir," remarked the banker, "to ascertain your wishes concerning a sum of eighty thousand pounds now placed to your account."

"Does it inconvenience you?" demanded Cavendish. "If so, I can transfer it elsewhere."

"Inconvenience, sir? By no means," replied the banker; "but pardon me for suggesting that it is too large a sum to remain unproductive; would you not like to invest it?"

"Invest it, eh? yes, invest it if you like; do as you please with it, but don't interrupt me about



such things again; I have other matters to think about."

Although not a philanthropist in any sense of the term, few persons have contributed more liberally towards the accomplishment of philanthropic objects. Subscription lists, if not the bearers of them, found ready access to Cavendish, and he dealt with them in a manner peculiarly his own. Glancing over the list of subscribers, he noticed the largest amount subscribed, and contributed a like sum. This peculiarity became so well known, that it was frequently abused, a fictitious subscription being announced for the purpose of misleading our philosopher. Although in early life Cavendish must have exercised no little amount of frugality in making his slender income suffice, yet a certain ignorance of the value of money characterised him throughout life: in proof of this, the following anecdotes may be cited. At a time when the funds of the Royal Institution were far less ample than at present, Sir Humphry Davy, then attached to that society, had opened a subscription list in order to purchase an expensive voltaic battery, rendered necessary for the prosecution of some discoveries which have since immortalised his name, and in which Cavendish was largely interested. People hoped that the philosophic millionaire would come down for a good round sum; but he did not contribute one penny, notwithstanding the various hints thrown out in the proper direction. If this be construed into penuriousness, contrast it with the following. A scientific gentleman having fallen into pecuniary embarrassments, some friends managed to procure for him the situation of temporary librarian to Cavendish, whose books were as much confused as the pecuniary matters of the librarian. The task was executed satisfactorily, and the gentleman took his departure, having received the stipulated salary, but nothing more. A short time subsequently, Cavendish happened to be present at a dinner of the Royal Society, and some friends of the quondam librarian thought it a good opportunity for turning the conversation on the subject of their *protégé*. His name accordingly was brought on the tapis. "Ah! how is he, what is he about?" inquired Cavendish. "Poor fellow! he is in the country, very badly off," was the reply. "I am very sorry, *very*," said Cavendish.

"We were hoping that you would have done something for him," the friends ventured to remark.

"I—I—I—what could I do?"

"We were hoping that you would have settled a small annuity upon him."

A dawn of light seemed to have irradiated the brain of Cavendish; the thought, apparently so obvious, had only then occurred to him for the first time. "True," replied he hurriedly; "*would a cheque for fifteen thousand pounds be of use?*"

Would a cheque for 15,000*l.* be of use?—what a question! The cheque was drawn, and the needy man of science made comfortable for life.

If the subject of our memoir did not possess that active, searching, and, what is equally important, that discriminating benevolence which seeks out the hidden recesses of misery, and cheers them with timely assistance, we have at least seen that he was open to suggestions, and that, when he did open his cheque book, it was after the manner of a

prince. He had no hatred of *mankind*, but of *womankind* that much cannot with truth be averred. If a female servant chanced to meet him in his own house, however inadvertently, it was the certain prelude to her dismissal; and the whole neighbourhood of Clapham was once lost in astonishment at a most remarkable phenomenon. It was no less than this: our philosopher, in one of his rural strolls, interposed to save a lady from the attacks of an infuriated bull. According to all the preconceived notions entertained respecting our friend, he would more probably have taken sides with the bull against the lady.

On one occasion, when dining with the associated fellows of the Royal Society, some of the philosophers, after the dinner was over, happened, when looking out of the window, to be attracted by the appearance of some young lady on the opposite side of the street, whom curiosity had led to glance in the direction of the apartment where so many *savans* were dining. "How lovely she is!" said one. "What a beauty!" whispered another. The moon had arisen, but the fellows were *not* apostrophising the moon. Cavendish, however, thought they were, and proceeded to the window to participate in their delight. No sooner did he discover his mistake than he uttered a faint scream, as was his wont when disturbed or annoyed, hobbled back to the table, and showed his disgust by the one single ejaculation, "Fshaw!" Though not much addicted to conviviality, he nevertheless was known to invite a few friends to dinner. On these occasions, everybody knew before-hand the bill of fare: a leg of mutton with trimmings; in other words, a due accompaniment of vegetables and sauce.

Now a leg of mutton—pleasant eating enough in itself—is not expensive; the number of a dinner party, when nothing else is provided, must be limited by imperious laws. Once Cavendish appeared to have forgotten this idea of a limit; he invited more guests than a leg of mutton could possibly suffice for. The result was an epistolary communication to that effect from his cook: (direct verbal communication, we have seen, was never permitted). "The leg of mutton will not be enough." "In that case provide *two*," replied Cavendish. But we must draw this memoir of a celebrated man to a close, and shall do it by quoting the words of his biographer.

"Such, then, was Cavendish in life and death, as he appeared to those who knew him best. Morally, his character was a blank, and can be described only by a series of negations. He did not love, he did not hate, he did not hope, he did not fear, he did not worship as others do. He separated himself from his fellow men, and apparently from God. There was nothing earnest, enthusiastic, heroic, or chivalrous in his nature, and as little was there anything mean, grovelling, or ignoble. He was almost passionless. All that needed for its apprehension more than the pure intellect, or required the exercise of fancy, imagination, affection, or faith, was distasteful to Cavendish. An intellectual head thinking, a pair of wonderfully acute eyes observing, and a pair of very skillful hands experimenting or recording, are all that I realise in reading his memorials. His brain seems to have been but a calculating engine; his eyes inlets

of vision, not fountains of tears; his hands instruments of manipulation, which never trembled with emotion, or were clasped together in adoration, thanksgiving, or despair; his heart only an anatomical organ, necessary for the circulation of the blood. Yet if such a being, who reversed the maxim "*Nihil humani me aliënium puto*," cannot be loved, as little can he be abhorred or despised. He was, in spite of the atrophy or non-development of many of the faculties which are found in those in whom the "elements are kindly mixed," as truly a genius as the *mere* poets, painters, and musicians, with small intellects and hearts, and large imaginations, to whom the world is so willing to bend the knee. Cavendish did not stand aloof from other men in a proud or supercilious spirit, refusing to count them as fellows. He felt himself separated from them by a great gulf, which neither they nor he could bridge over, and across which it was vain to extend hands or exchange greetings. A sense of isolation from his brethren made him shrink from their society and avoid their presence; but he did so as one conscious of an infirmity, not boasting of an excellence. He was like a deaf mute sitting apart from a circle, whose looks and gestures show that they are uttering and listening to music and eloquence, in producing or welcoming which he can be no sharer. He dwelt apart, and, bidding the world farewell, took the self-imposed vows of a scientific anchorite, and, like the monks of old, shut himself up within his cell. It was a kingdom sufficient for him, and from its narrow window he saw as much of the universe as he cared to see. It had a throne also, and from it he dispensed royal gifts to his brethren. He was one of the unthanked benefactors of his race, who was patiently teaching and serving mankind, whilst they were shrinking from his coldness, or mocking his peculiarities. He could not sing for them a sweet song, or create a "thing of beauty," which should be a "joy for ever," or touch their hearts, or fire their spirits, or deepen their reverence or their fervour. He was not a poet, or priest, or a prophet; but only a cold, clear intelligence, laying down pure white light, which brightened everything on which it fell, but warmed nothing—a star of at least the second, if not of the first magnitude in the intellectual firmament." How mournful to think that a man with so many excellences stood aloof from that generous and ennobling faith which would have quickened his dormant affections, and superadded to his intellectual eminence the attractiveness of christian love.

#### BREAD AT HOME AND BREAD IN PARIS.

THAT important visitor, the *baker*, is with us, in many respects, a different kind of personage from the baker of Paris. We know him as one whose whitened fustian clothing, and face almost as white, and basket laden with four-pound and two-pound loaves, appears at our doors every day, supplying the "staff of life" to those who can pay for it. And if we follow the baker to his home, and inquire concerning his mode of conducting business, we find that he is just as free from legal restraint as most other traders.

He can buy flour where he likes, from whom he likes, and in such quantities as he likes; he may take apprentices or not, as he pleases; he may make loaves of such sizes as he may choose, and may put such a price upon them as may seem to him proper—limited only by the probability or otherwise of his obtaining the price asked. It is true that there are some laws which control his proceedings. He must sell his bread by weight; he must give good weight and honest bread; and the hours of his trading on Sunday are placed under limit. If he adulterates his bread, he is, of course, a dishonest man in the same sense as any other deceiver. In Paris, however, the government exercise a degree of control over the making and selling of bread, such as has not been known in England for many centuries.

Let us look back a little at this bread-question, to compare past times with present in London. In olden days there were many corn markets in the metropolis, of which the chief was on Cornhill, so named from this very circumstance. During the fifteenth century there were granaries maintained by the city corporation; the mayor and aldermen were accustomed to purchase and store corn in cheap seasons, in order to keep down the price in times of scarcity. One of the lord mayors, sir Stephen Brown, in 1438, is commended by Fuller in that he "charitably relieved the wants of the poor citizens, by sending ships at his own expense to Dantzic, which returned laden with rye, and which seasonable supply soon sunk grain to reasonable rates." In our own day, wheaten bread is eaten to an extent that has probably never been equalled at any former period of our history; even the poor, small as may be the quantity they obtain, eat wheaten bread as well as their betters; for, in truth, the bakers make very little bread of barley, oats, or rye. Not so in past times. Harrison, in his "Account of England in the days of queen Elizabeth," says: "The bread throughout the land is made of such graine as the soil yieldeth; nevertheless the gentilitie commonlie provide themselves sufficientlie of wheat for their owne tables, whilst their household and poore neighbours, in some shires, are enforced to content themselves with rie and barleie; yea, and in time of dearth, manie with bread made either of bran, peasen, or otes, or of altogether, and some acorns among." About the reign of Elizabeth, the London bakers were under stringent rules; and still more pressing were the laws which operated upon millers and corn-dealers.

There is a curious record to show that Stratford, in Essex, supplied London with part of its bread in those days. Carts laden with bread came from Stratford every morning; and on one occasion, when corn and flour were scarce, "there was such a press about the carts, that one man was ready to destroy another, striving to be served for their money." The city granaries were kept up—not for the purpose of giving corn, but of selling it below the market price in dear times. The motive was kind, but repeated difficulties occurred in putting it in practice; and on some occasions it was found

necessary to order that no corn should be sold below the market price; while in others the exact quantity was prescribed which might be sold in one day. The twelve great city companies (goldsmiths, fishmongers, etc.) were all expected to store the city granaries with corn, and to sell it to the corporation at fixed prices, that it might afterwards be sold to the poor; the plan was very artificial, and led to repeated wranglings; and when the granaries were burned at the great fire in 1666, the system was suddenly brought to an end. There have never since been any public granaries in London, the storing of corn being left entirely to individual enterprise.

But the bakers of London remained under the tight hand of the law, although the public granaries were abandoned. The Stratford bakers, mentioned above, sent their bread to London in carts, and the carts took up their stations in Cornhill and Cheapside; but it was ordained that the Stratford bread should be "two ounces in the penny wheat-loaf heavier than the penny wheat-loaf baked in the city"—probably as a boon to the citizens. On one occasion, Stow tells us a Stratford baker, as a punishment for selling light-weight loaves, was drawn on a hurdle through the London streets, with a fool's cap on his head, and the unlucky loaves suspended around his neck. In those days, not only was it necessary for the baker to make his loaves of definite weight, but the price he was to charge for them was dictated by others, not by himself. The *assize* of bread regulated all this. The penny loaf was a penny loaf still, whether the price of wheat were high or low; but it varied in size or *assize*, according to rules laid down by those in authority; and the difficulty of establishing such rules fairly was the chief cause of the abandonment of the *assize* in modern times. Some of the regulations for the baking trade now seem to us strange and incomprehensible; such, for instance, as a prohibition to the baking and selling of loaves of household bread at more than twopence each, except at Christmas. About a century and a half ago, the *assize* regulation was, that when wheat was thirty shillings per quarter, the penny loaf should weigh one pound; and it will be found, on a little calculation, that this tallies very nearly with the relative prices at the present day; only that, in the former time, the price was compulsory, and in the present voluntary. In 1815, the *assize* on bread in London was abolished; and since that time the bakers have not been much pressed upon by the legislature. An act of parliament made a few regulations in 1836, of which one was that bread should be made and sold by *weight*, and not by *quarters* and *half-quarters*.

Now let us turn the picture and look on the Parisian side of it. What do we there see? The Paris baker is hemmed in by laws on every side. He can barely call his shop his own, or his apprentices, or his flour, or his oven, or his loaves. He must do as others will, not as he himself wills. Of course, if the control were of such a nature as to leave him no profit, he would "shut up shop," and depart altogether;

but the singularity of the system is, not in the denial of profit, but in the fringe-work of regulations which bounds all his proceedings.

This government interference with the Parisian bakers is of very early date. Five or six centuries ago the fraternity was under a court officer called the *Grand Panetier*; and admission into it could only be obtained by one who had gone through all the stages, from the winnower of the flour to the head journeyman. In later ages, the control of the bakers was transferred from the grand panetier to the prefect of police. The prefect issued edicts from time to time, regulating the mixing of the dough, the choice of ingredients, the size of the loaves, and the price to be charged for the bread. The number of bakers is limited; and not only is a baker prohibited from commencing business without a certain official ordeal, but he is also forbidden to *abandon* it without permission obtained. The bakers are placed in four classes, according as they use less than two, two, three, or four sacks of flour per day.

Even the apprentices of the bakers are so much under control, that their dresses are prescribed, both within and without the limits of the bakehouse. The period of apprenticeship is defined, and also the amount of premium paid. Of course, in such a state of government influence, the ambition of the baker leads him to aspire to be a "baker of four sacks a day," if he can; because the chief baker or "syndic" of the fraternity is a personage of no mean importance; and the bakers generally, though under the vigilant eye of the law, are not exposed to the same kind of individual competition as those of London.

In London, as has already been stated, there are no public granaries now maintained by the state or by the corporation; but in Paris the old system in this respect still survives. Every baker is compelled to keep a certain quantity of flour in a public granary, the quantity to depend on the amount of his daily trade.

How strange does it now seem to us here in England, to read of what occurred at Paris in 1853! The supply of bread was scanty, because corn was scanty; and the scantiness gave rise to high prices. The poor complained, naturally enough; and the government, heeding the complaints, *compelled* bakers to sell bread at a certain fixed price, whatever the price of corn might have been. But the bakers would have been ruined thereby, for the bread actually cost them more than they were empowered to receive; and the government guaranteed to reimburse them at some future period. This reimbursement, however, could only come from the taxes raised from the community generally; and we thus see how singularly the mode of proceeding works out its own results. In London, alas! we have poverty enough, and hunger enough; but somehow or other, unless our fellowmen be absolutely penniless, there is always bread for them; there are, whatever may have been the richness or scarcity of the harvest, always bakers who have a store of loaves on their shelves, and whose quantities and prices of bread are regulated entirely without the interference of the government.



## How to Choose a Wife.\*

In the choice of a wife, *excellence of moral and religious character must be the first great essential.*—Your own religious interests on earth are deeply involved in marriage. What comfort, what peace of mind can the husband have, where there is inconstancy, irreligion, and infidelity on the part of the wife? Marry an irreligious woman, and you will have no domestic resource to flee to in the hour of religious need. There will be none to admonish you when you neglect your religious duties. An irreligious wife cannot counsel you when you are under the influence of severe temptation, neither can she assist to resolve your doubts in cases of conscience. To all matters of religious experience the friend of your bosom will be a stranger and an alien. She cannot help you, she cannot sympathise with you, she cannot understand you. 1 Cor. ii. 14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Sad must be the condition of the husband whose griefs his spouse cannot relieve, and whose trials she cannot share. Many young men have great difficulty in maintaining their hold of religion and in discharging its duties even when single. How will that difficulty be increased if they marry irreligious wives! If now you find it hard work to keep the commands of your Maker, if you now make such indifferent progress in religion, what will you do when united to one who has no religion, one who has never even sought it with success?

Religion is worth more than beauty, accomplishments, and talent. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

It frequently happens that an ungodly wife uses her husband's profession of religion as the instrument of persecution. Unchristianising him for the least provocation, and often, without any cause whatever, she shakes his faith and harrows his heart. You may demur to this and say, although the female I should like to marry is not religious, she is mild and gentle, and therefore will not put a stumbling-block in my path. The Scriptures tell us that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." You must either deny the Scripture doctrine, or grant that your quiet intended may one day turn upon you.

Pause, young man, before you marry an irreligious wife. Men have been more than conquerors through the blood of the Lamb, and gone safe home to heaven, although their wives did not serve God. But are you equal to such a task? Can you roll the stone of Sisyphus? Let your own unfaithfulness answer the question. Let your meagre religious attainments answer it. Let the frequency with which you have gone astray from God and brought yourself into condemnation, answer the question. You have no grace to spare. Be honest with yourself, and you will feel that, so far from needing one to hinder you in the way to heaven, you require one to assist you in your progress.

This earth is not the only world in which you will be religiously influenced by your marriage. Its results will make you happier among the spirits of just men made perfect, or more miserable in the unknown regions of the lost. The influences of marriage go beyond earth's narrow confines, and cleave to the disembodied spirit throughout the mighty cycle of the eternal years. The wife on earth that best deserves the name of angel is she who

"Tries each art, reproveth each dull delay,  
Allures to brighter worlds, and leads the way."

*Good health is too important a matter to be overlooked in choosing a partner for life.*—Health is next to piety in the scale of the ascertained value of blessings. It is more than fortune. Fortunes have been wasted in vain to supply its lack of service. Continual sickness is a continual calamity.

\* The following passages are extracted from a very useful little work bearing this title, and which is quite a manual of good counsels to those who are meditating the important step of matrimony. London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co.

It interferes with the regular course of business and of life. A sickly wife can do nothing for herself, nor for any one else. Servants must manage her household, and strangers train her children. Continued sickness is the heaviest possible source of expenditure, and the destruction of home comfort. Of course, when affliction comes unforeseen, and in the order of the providence of God, it must be taken as one of the trials of life. Under such circumstances, a husband receives divine consolation and providential provision. Should such unforeseen trials ever be yours, youthful reader, we hope you will do honour to your sex, by a ceaseless vigil in the sick room of your ailing wife. This would be your duty, and we know too much of the goodness of the youthful heart, when under the reign of grace, to doubt your capacity and willingness for its performance. Notwithstanding this, religion gives you no warrant wilfully and knowingly to form an alliance with disease. Do not seek to have a continuous doctor's bill rolled up in your marriage settlement.

Some diseases are hereditary. Deliberately to marry where such diseases are known to exist, is worse than folly. It is to help to spread an evil among mankind, to transmit a calamity and a scourge to future generations. Many children have been a plague to themselves, and a burden to their parents and society, during the whole course of their lives, in consequence of this imprudence. Weigh well the value of good health and a good constitution before you marry.

*Correct domestic habits belong to the class of essentials.*—Some females seem happiest when they are gadding about from house to house, and jaunting from one locality to another. Wherever there are friends to entertain them, they are sure to go. The carrier's van, the gig, the omnibus, the carriage, the railway train, every kind of road, every mode of travelling, and every species of conveyance, is pressed into the service of their roving disposition. One feels half inclined to think them stray members of an Arab tribe. Forest rangers are very well in their way, but do not marry a ranger, as you would avoid perpetual motion. It is but little in domestic management and supervision that can be done by proxy; and when the wife is frequently abroad, things are sure to go wrong at home. A wife can have very little regard for her husband's purse, who trusts servants with the exclusive management of all her household affairs.

Extravagance is as injurious as excessive visiting. Under its baneful influence, the amplest fortune must disappear, as snow melts under the influence of the sun. You may not always be able to lay your hand on the particular extravagance by which your property is being wasted, but you will feel that it is not the less really diminishing, because the particular form of its decrease is almost imperceptible. It will not be particularly consoling for you to know that your hard earnings are being frittered away in frivolity, or squandered in extravagance.

Covetousness is quite as great an evil in household management as extravagance. It abridges the necessities of life, destroys domestic comfort, and even defeats its own purpose, because persons invariably pay dear for their determination to cheapen everything. A covetous housekeeper will look shy at your relatives, scare away every one of your visiting friends, and even destroy your own health by her slave-driving parsimony. Some females are everything you can desire, except this one thing—they cannot keep your house in order. They are beautiful, wealthy, refined, amiable, and accomplished, but they cannot manage. Let none think that superiority in these things disqualifies for domestic duties. You will find as many slatternly wives and bad housekeepers among the vulgar and ordinary, as you will find among the accomplished and refined.

Nothing can redeem the want of good domestic qualities. With them you may be happy, without them you never can. Is the lady to whom you intend paying your addresses fond of housekeeping now? Is she domestic now? If she is not now, you have no reason to expect that she will be after your nuptials.